Partnership for New York City

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING ON THE PROPOSED DOMINO SUGAR REZONING

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2007

KATHRYN WYLDE

PRESIDENT & CEO
PARTNERSHIP FOR NEW YORK CITY

The Partnership for New York City is a citywide business organization that represents New York's largest private employers and investment firms. We are an advocate for public policies that generate jobs, tax revenues and economic benefits for the city.

We also have a history with the neighborhood of Williamsburg, where, through our New York City Housing Partnership subsidiary, we joined with community organizations to sponsor private development of 750 affordable homes and apartments in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. Through our New York City Investment Fund, we also helped finance the nearby Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center's program to preserve viable industrial uses in the community. And so it is as a long time supporter of both affordable housing and industrial retention that the Partnership weighs in on the plan for the reuse of the Domino Sugar Refinery site.

The plan detailed in the Scoping document adheres to the goals laid out in the rezoning approved for Greenpoint-Williamsburg in 2005, and promises additional commitments in the areas of affordable housing, community facilities, open space and waterfront access. As envisioned, the New Domino will provide housing affordable to a wide range of the community, as well as 500 retail and operations based jobs. It also includes a plan for the provision of direct ferry service, which is an important component of strengthening our regional and inner city mass transit network.

For years, neighborhoods had to stand by while the only sites available for residential development were effectively land banked for industrial waterfront uses that never materialized. Meanwhile, the most noxious uses - transfer stations, construction equipment storage and sanitation facilities - took over many of our most promising development sites and neighborhoods. The recent rezoning of the Brooklyn waterfront and projects like the New Domino provide an opportunity to create a new balance in our waterfront neighborhoods. Community Preservation Corporation has a 30- year history financing affordable housing in Brooklyn and throughout the city. Their commitment and track record will help ensure a successful project.

Our city's viability and growth depend on the creative reuse of land and buildings that are forever being adapted to changing economic conditions. Through this proposal, the Domino Refinery will have a new life. A different life, to be sure. But one that promises good things for local residents.